MRS. DELLA IRVING HAYDEN.

CHAPTER LIX.

MRS. DELLA IRVING HAYDEN.

At the close of the Civil War we find the subject of our sketch in the town of Tarboro, N. C., without a mother's care, her mother having in the early days of the war moved to the Old Dominion.

In her incipiency she knew the care of none but a grandmother, to whom she was devoted with all of the devotion a child could bestow. Though separated for years by landscape, there continued in the mother's breast that love and devotion that are peculiar to her sex; hence she returned in search of her lost child in 1865, finding her in vigorous health. She, as the shepherd doth the lost sheep, took her child upon her breast and over rocky steeps and swollen streams wound her way back to Virginia.

As the infant grew she proved to be of a brilliant mind, and even when but a child exhibited great tact in the management of little folks around her. There being no free schools in operation at that day for colored children, she was taught to spell by a white friend who consented to teach her at the request of her mother. From the old Webster spelling-book she made her start, and soon learned as far as *baker*—a great accomplishment in those days. After getting a foretaste of an education she, then a young miss, became very anxious for an education. Free schools were not yet in existence, so she entered school seven miles away in Nansemond

county. This school was under the control of the Freedmen's Bureau, and taught by a Mr. A. B. Colis, of New Jersey. The next year her parents moved from Nansemond county to Franklin, Southampton county, Va., where she entered the public school.

In school she was obedient, docile, kind and punctual, Out of school she was the delight of her playmates and apparently the life of the school. Early in her life she was converted and joined the Baptist Church. As a Christian she was a shining light and an ardent worker in the cause of Christianity.

Years and deeds having hastened her near the verge of womanhood, she became a faithful teacher and an earnest worker in the Sabbath-school, to which work she became very much attached. She was secretary for Sunday-school and church clerk for several years.

In 1872 she entered the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute with very limited means, with none to look to but a widowed mother. But she was not too proud to do any work assigned her to assist her in paying school bills.

Lapse of years having brought her to womanhood, we may now call her Miss Irving.

During her school-days at Hampton she stood high in the esteem of both her school-mates and teachers. In her second term in school she made the acquaintance of Mrs. G. M. Jones, of Philadelphia, who gave some financial aid and has ever since been a warm and devoted friend.

In 1874, Miss Irving (as she was then), having a deter-

mined will of her own and hearing the continual appeal of her people to "come over in Macedonia and help us," could no longer resist the pitiful cry, and laid down the pursuit of her studies, and, with that burning zeal of a missionary, laid hold of the work that she had so long desired. By so doing she did much to dispel the gloom which overshadowed her people, and financially enabled herself to resume her studies in 1875. Her first school-house was a little log cabin in a section of her own county known as Indian Town. Her first term was marked with great success and she filled the first place in the hearts of the people among whom she labored. There she organized a Sunday-school, for which she acted as teacher, chorister and superintendent. So great was the love of the people for her that they said they didn't believe the county paid her enough for the valuable services she rendered them, and as a unit came together and made up the deficiency as nearly as they could, for they thought that currency could not compensate for the great good and the blessings that she had been the means of bestowing upon them.

Her second term was taught four miles from this place, where it was difficult to find a family near the school with sufficient room to board a teacher, most of the houses having only one room. She was sent to such a house to board. This was too much for the young teacher. The people looked upon her as a jewel and would do anything to please her, so she called the parents together and they willingly united and built another room to the house, the teacher furnishing the nails.

In 1875 she returned to Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute and resumed her studies.

In 1877 she graduated with honor and was the winner of a $20 prize offered to the best original essayist of the class. On her return home to resume the work among her people, to which she felt so closely espoused, she was elected prinicipal of the town public school. Here she met with some competition for the position, but energy, push and competency always hold sway over all opposition, where fair play is granted. She outstripped her rivals, and filled the position with credit three years.

She was looked upon as the spiritual, educational and political adviser of her neighborhood for the colored people. In the church and Sunday-school she had no peer, for both minister and Sunday-school superintendent sought her advice as to the best means of spiritualizing the church and enlivening the Sunday-school.

She stands in the ranks among the best educators of her race. Through her influence and recommendation a great many young men and women have gained admission into some of the best institutions of learning in the United States. Many of them she assisted financially, while in school, from her scanty income, which was a sacrifice but a pleasure. Quite a number of them have graduated and are filling honorable positions.

As a politician she was so well informed and could discuss so intelligently the public issues of the day that in her town, in the campaign of 1884, she was styled the politicians' oracle. She, as did Paul, ceased not day nor night to warn her people of the danger that awaited

them. While teaching she did not fail to practice economy, for she saved means to lift a heavy debt off her property which she mortgaged to secure means to finish her education.

In 1880 she married Mr. Lindsey Hayden, an accomplished gentleman, who was principal of the public school of Liberty (now Bedford City), Va. Unfortunately for her Mr. Hayden lived only a few months after marriage. During his short illness Mr. Hayden found in her every requisite of a true wife and ever his administering angel. After the death of her devoted husband she resigned the position as first assistant teacher in the school in which her husband had so recently been principal and returned to Franklin to live with her widowed mother. Notwithstanding all hearts went out in sympathy for her in her bereavement there was a sort of mingled joy at her return to her old field of labor, since it seemed a matter of impossibility to fill her place as a worker among her people. In the fall of 1881 she was elected again principal of the town school, which position she held for nine years.

As a temperance worker and lecturer in general the United States cannot boast of one more ardent. She served three years as president of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union and the Home Missionary Society, organized by Mrs. Marriage Allen, the wonderful messenger of England, four years as recording secretary of the county Sunday-school Union, one year as corresponding secretary of the Bethany Baptist Sunday-school Convention. She has organized a great many temper-

ance societies, and hundreds have taken the pledge. She is at present president of the Virginia Teachers' Temperance Union.

In 1890 she was elected lady principal of the Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute, which position she now holds. Says Gen. S. C. Armstrong, Principal of the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute:

Mrs. Della Irving Hayden was at Hampton school four years and made a most excellent record. We all here, teachers and friends, expected a great deal of her, and have not been disappointed. She married a noble young man, Mr. Lindsey Hayden, who soon died — a great loss. Since her bereavement Mrs. Hayden has devoted herself nobly to her people. We hope she may be spared many years. She is among the famous women of her race.

Says Miss Maggie I. Stevens:

Mrs. Della Irving Hayden well deserves the name *woman*. I was a pupil in school under her thirteen years ago. It was through her I gained admission into the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute. It is to her (through the help of God) I owe my success in literary attainment. She has no peer as a quick thinker and an earnest worker.

James H. Johnston, A. M., President of the Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute, says:

Since Mrs. Hayden's election as lady-principal of this institution she has exhibited unusual tact and ability in the performance of her duty, thereby gaining the love and esteem of the students and commendation of the Board of Visitors. As a temperance worker she has been exceedingly active, and has succeeded in getting hundreds of our students and teachers of the annual summer session to sign the pledge. * * * She does not fail to use her pen and power of speech, which she possesses in no ordinary degree, to advance the Master's kingdom.

Dr. J. F. Bryant, County Superintendent of Southampton county, in speaking of her qualifications as a teacher, said:

Mrs. Della I. Hayden taught twelve years in the public schools of Southampton to the entire satisfaction of patrons and school officers — the most of the time under my supervision. She was principal of a large graded school in this place. Her executive capacity is of a high order, and she manages a school of a hundred or more pupils with as much dexterity and ease as most teachers with twenty or twenty-five pupils. Her ambition in her chosen profession is unbounded, and she never tires. Beginning with a third grade certificate she was enabled to attend the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, teaching one year and returning to the school the other, until she graduated with distinction at that institute. She finally obtained a professional certificate, the highest grade, under the public school system, as a reward for her perseverance, energy and ability.

The foregoing statements will give our readers a faint view only of the wonderful and useful life that Mrs. D. I. Hayden has lived for years among her people.

WILLIS B. HOLLAND,
Principal of Public School, Franklin, Va.

CHAPTER LX.

MRS. N. A. R. LESLIE.

Modest, zealous, aspiring and faithful to duty; economical and yet philanthropic; conservative and kind, are traits characteristic of this very devoted laborer in the cause of Afro-American education.

She was born in Amelia county, Va., and is the fourth daughter of Nannie and Charles P. Coles. She has taught school most of her life, beginning with the Eng-